

GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE

NATIONAL MONUMENT

Interpretive Strategy and
Environmental Education Strategy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

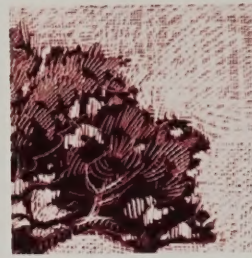
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Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument was designated September 18, 1996, and encompasses approximately 1.9 million acres. It is the first national monument administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The President's Proclamation states that the Monument's "...vast and austere landscape embraces a spectacular array of scientific and historic resources. This high, rugged, and remote region, where bold plateaus and multi-hued cliffs run for distances that defy human perspective, was the last place in the continental United States to be explored and mapped. Even today, this unspoiled natural area remains a frontier, a quality that greatly enhances the monument's value for scientific study. The monument has a long and dignified human history: it is a place where one can see how nature shapes human endeavors in the American West, where distance and aridity have been pitted against dreams and courage. The monument presents exemplary opportunities for geologists, paleontologists, archaeologists, historians, and biologists."



Introduction

Across the vast expanses of seemingly limitless open lands to the narrow, sculpted sandstone canyons, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument sparks the imagination and stirs the soul. Thousands of stories are waiting to be revealed to eager participants in the Monument experience.

“Interpretation is the art of putting information into a form that visitors are able AND willing to understand.”

- David Bucy

Through educational and interpretive programs, visitors and students gain a deeper appreciation for the Monument’s historic and scientific resources. These programs provide formal and informal educational opportunities to enhance understanding and knowledge of the Monument’s biological and earth sciences, prehistoric life and environments, and cultural histories. First and foremost, educational and interpretive programs share the stories of the Monument, but the programs are also designed to safeguard the remote and undeveloped character of the Monument, and to protect the scientific and historic resources for the learning and enjoyment of current and future generations.

The Interpretive Strategy and the Environmental Education Strategy for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument are tiered off of the Monument Proclamation and the Monument Management Plan, which was implemented February 2000. These strategies provide a detailed framework for making educational and interpretive programming decisions during the next ten years. This executive summary provides a brief overview of the framework and an implementation schedule for both.

Monument Management Direction

The overall vision described in the Monument Management Plan states two basic precepts:

- *Safeguard the remote and undeveloped character of the Monument.*
- *Provide an opportunity for the study of scientific and historic resources.*

Educational and interpretive programs and services are consistent with the Management Plan, emphasizing preservation of the Monument as an unspoiled natural area while recognizing its value for scientific research. The remote character of the land will be maintained both as a safeguard for Monument resources and as an inspiration to its visitors.

The Monument Management Plan includes a BLM-directed science program, focused on understanding and preserving Monument resources while assisting in the improvement of land management practices. The educational and interpretive programs enhance public understanding of the importance of scientific research, protection of Monument resources, and protecting the remote and undeveloped character of the Monument. A successful educational and interpretive program will generate appreciation, protection, and support for Monument resources and programs.

“Sometimes progress is measured in mastering frontiers, but sometimes we must measure progress in protecting frontiers for our children and all children to come.”

- President William J. Clinton
Monument Designation Address
1996

Purpose of Educational and interpretive Programs

These strategies provide the overall guide for designing a variety of communication media, including visitor centers and contact stations, wayside exhibits, publications, guided activities and educational programs, as well as off-site media such as websites, videos, and CD-ROMs. Detailed design plans will be made at a later time for site specific facilities.

Interpretive and education programs help the public:

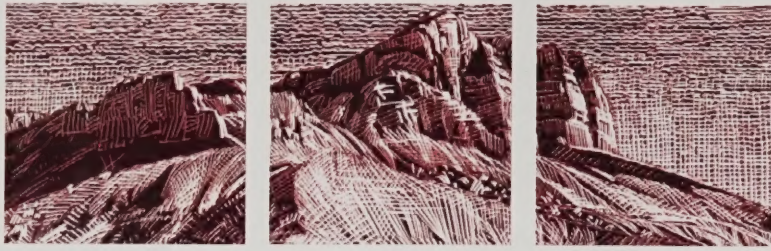
- Understand, appreciate, and respect the resources found in the Monument.
- Understand the role of science and research.
- Understand and appreciate the cultures that have passed through or reside near the Monument and their relationship with the land.
- Understand the relationship of resources found in the Monument to other places and landscapes.
- Understand how to minimize impacts to Monument resources.
- Be prepared to have a safe, educational, and enjoyable experience in the Monument.

Objectives for Educational and interpretive Programs

Educational and interpretive strategies:

- Provide unifying and specific themes, goals, and objectives.
- Identify the most compelling and relevant themes and stories.
- Identify sites and areas in the Monument that tell these stories.
- Identify and prioritize information, topics, and themes for use in publications, exhibits, curriculum, and other interpretive media.
- Identify opportunities for federal, state and local agencies, other agencies, local communities, Native American Indian tribes, outfitters and guides, and other groups to provide programs and products.
- Identify opportunities for resource specialists, researchers, and managers to participate in the development of outreach programs and products.
- Plan for existing and anticipated Monument visitors.





Audience Analysis

While this area is remote and difficult to reach, visitor-use has been increasing steadily since the 1980s. Since 1981, visitation has increased almost threefold at adjacent Bryce Canyon National Park to more than two million in 2000, and nearly doubled in Capitol Reef National Park. In 2001, the Monument had over half a million visitors.

“When one of us says, ‘Look, there’s nothing out there,’ what we are really saying is, ‘I cannot see.’”

- Terry Tempest Williams,
Plateau Journal,
1997

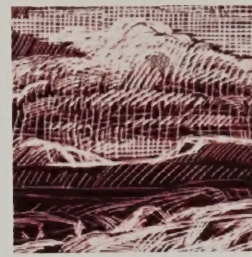
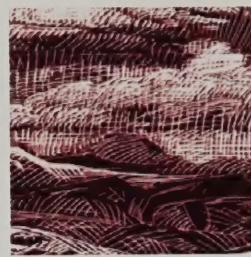
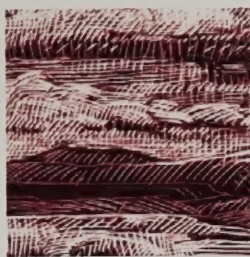
Visitor-use peaks in April and May, primarily with college students enjoying spring break or class tours. Summer brings families, international tourists, and other groups windshield-touring the national parks in the area. Visitor-use again peaks in September and October with retirees and international tourists who have time to enjoy exploring the myriad of canyons in the area. During winter months visitation is low, consisting mostly of hunters and local residents.

Visitor Studies

A backcountry use study was completed by Utah State University in the winter of 1999 that describes visitor-use patterns, visitor characteristics, and the quality and quantity of backpacking, hiking, and other non-motorized recreation activities occurring on the Monument. This study contains valuable information about backcountry use; not only the nature of the recreation use within the Monument, but also interactions between Monument uses and values.

No scientific studies have been completed related to the Monument’s frontcountry users. In the interim, visitor data from nearby national parks, state parks, local communities, and commercial tourism providers (i.e. tour bus operators) have been collected and analyzed to help the agency plan for future visitor services.

It should be noted that visitor numbers and demographics appear to be rapidly changing, and that collecting reliable, scientifically-valid data is not only an urgent need at present, but will continue to be vital in the future. It is recommended that funds be allocated for a sociological study of the demographics, expectations, and recreation experience preferences of frontcountry users. Future repetition of studies is required to study trends.



Educational and Interpretive Program Themes

Themes help organize and focus the information visitors receive. Themes are based on the messages and topics management wants the visitors to remember. Few visitors will remember facts and figures, but most will remember themes. Objectives have been developed for each theme to give management a benchmark to evaluate learning outcomes for educational and interpretive programs.

Monument-wide themes have been developed to communicate the vision, purpose, and special values of the resource. Specific themes focus on education of the selected topics: biology/ecology, cultural history, geology/paleontology, and science/research. The following primary themes will be used when developing educational and interpretive programs for the Monument.

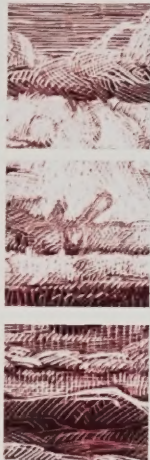
General Monument-wide Interpretive Themes

The following themes will be woven throughout all Monument-wide educational and interpretive programs;

- The Monument is exceptional because of its size, its rich archaeological and historic resources, and its wide array of plant and animal populations.
- The Monument landscape shapes patterns of life and influences human endeavors.
- Science is the key to better understanding and appreciation of the Monument.
- Visitor safety and visitor orientation are management priorities.
- Resource protection is a management priority.

“Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.”

- Freeman Tilden
Interpreting Our Heritage
1977



Biology/Ecology Themes

The following themes will be the focus of the Escalante Visitor Center. Additionally, these themes will be incorporated into Monument-wide educational programs, publications, and outdoor signing.

- The Monument and surrounding public lands provide one of the largest arid ecosystem mosaics in the continental United States.
- “Ecology” is the particular science that asks questions concerning patterns of life.
- Distinct and intriguing patterns of life are evident at all scales, whether looking down from a spaceship orbiting the earth, viewing grand Monument landscapes from a high ridge top, or discovering the amazing variety of life apparent from just inches above the soil surface.
- Geology, topography, and climate have combined to produce similar physiographic and biotic patterns across much of the Colorado Plateau region.
- Across the Colorado Plateau region, great variations in geologic substrates, soil characteristics, topographic features, and elevation are responsible for complex landscape mosaics with diverse assemblages of interspersed habitats and biotic communities.
- The wide range of elevations, water availability, soils, geologic structures, and climates present in the Monument and surrounding areas has resulted in a tremendous variety of relatively distinct biotic communities, including hanging gardens and gallery riparian forests, extensive sagebrush scrublands and pinyon-juniper woodlands, and even subalpine forests on Boulder Mountain.
- Close inspection reveals that there is a great variety of life even at the soil surface, where cryptobiotic soil crusts occur—miniature biological communities composed of cyanobacteria, mosses, multicolored lichens, liverworts, microfungi, and green algae.

Cultural History Themes

The following themes will be the focus of the Cannonville, Kanab, and Glendale Visitor Centers. Additionally, these themes will be incorporated into educational programs, Monument wide publications, and outdoor signing.

- The rugged, remote, and arid character of the landscape has shaped patterns of use, migration, exploration, settlement, and cultural interaction.
- Several native cultures have occupied or traveled through the region of the Monument, leaving concentrations of archaeological sites.

- Human activities have had wide-reaching effects on the landscape.
- Several European-American cultures have also influenced the history of the region and have left more recent evidence of their presence.

Geology / Paleontology Themes

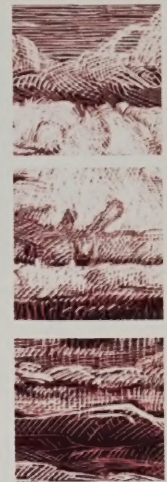
The following themes will be the focus of the Big Water and Kanab Visitor Centers. Additionally, these themes will be incorporated into educational programs, Monument-wide publications, and outdoor signing.

- Water, wind, and geologic forces within the earth have shaped the dramatic landscape in processes that continue today.
- Ongoing research projects use the latest techniques and equipment to shed new light on geologic processes.
- Through vast and varied exposures of color and texture, the rock layers in the Monument tell a story spanning millions of years of change.
- The Grand Staircase, a dominant geographic feature of the area, rises more than 5,500 feet from the base of the Paria River Basin to the rim of Bryce Canyon in an unbroken sequence of great cliffs and plateaus.
- Environmental, climatic, and geological processes, as well as human influences, continue to shape the Monument landscapes.
- Paleontological sites on the Monument reveal the complex and ever-changing nature of life on earth.

Science / Research Themes

The following themes will be woven throughout all Monument-wide educational and interpretive programs.

- The Monument offers unique opportunities for research and learning.
- “Science” is a way of knowing. It is a method of inquiry, a way of asking questions and seeking answers, and a way of expanding our knowledge. Science is the method we use to seek order in the wonderfully complex and fascinating world around us.
- Scientists use many tools to unlock the secrets of the natural and physical world and of cultural history.
- Biologists, geologists, archaeologists, and other natural science researchers further our understanding of the relationships between environments, species, and processes.
- Anthropologists, historians, and other social scientists discover the history of human cultures.





Visitor Centers

Monument Visitor Centers will be located in the major communities on the Monument perimeter. Each visitor center will focus on a primary theme. The goal of focusing each visitor center on different stories is to encourage visitation on the perimeter of the Monument while providing an in-depth and vicarious experience for the visitors.

- Kanab *Geology, Archaeology, Anthropology, and the history of science in the region.*
- Escalante *Biology, Ecology*
- Cannonville *Human Geography (the relationship between people and landscape)*
- Big Water *Paleontology with a focus on the Cretaceous Period*
- Glendale *Local History and Regional Tourism Information*

Visitor Centers, Interpretive Media, and Exhibits Goals

- To increase the visitors' appreciation of the scientific value of the Monument resources.
- To introduce visitors to educational, interpretive, and recreational opportunities available on nearby national and state parks and national forests, as well as in the Monument frontcountry.
- To encourage visitors to remain within the Monument perimeter region.

An integrated, multi-disciplinary planning approach is being used to design the Monument visitor centers. Interpretive planners, architects, engineers, exhibit designers, landscape architects, and Monument specialists are collaborating on structural and exhibit design.

<i>Facility Design, Construction, and Exhibit Installation Timeline</i>					
<i>Facility Location</i>	<i>Facility 100% Design</i>	<i>Facility Completion Date</i>	<i>Facility Open Date</i>	<i>Exhibit 100% Design</i>	<i>Exhibit Installation Date</i>
Cannonville Visitor Center	-	4/2002	5/2002	3/2003	11/2003
Big Water Visitor Center	-	6/2002	8/2002	3/2003	11/2003
Escalante Science Center	5/2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2003	3/2003	11/2003
Kanab Visitor Center	-	-	Fall 2003	3/2003	11/2003
(rental space) Glendale Contact Station	12/2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2003	3/2003	11/2003



Environmental Education Outreach

The Environmental Education Strategy outlines the purpose, goals, objectives, and future direction of educational outreach. This strategy recognizes that Monument staff has been involved with several educational outreach programs over the past several years. The Monument management team is dedicated to continue fulfilling commitments with local schools as well as setting new direction for future environmental education programming.

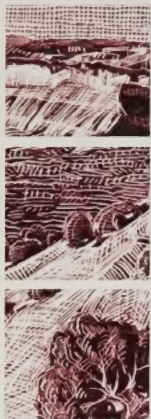
Over the short term, an educational committee consisting of Monument staff, local teachers, and members of the communities has been formed to assist with the review of curriculum development in concurrence with interpretive exhibits for the visitor centers. The committee is also involved in developing a lecture series in communities on the perimeter of the Monument. These lectures are slated to take place from Spring through Fall.

Environmental Education Curriculum

The environmental education curriculums will be designed concurrently with the development of interpretive exhibits for the visitor centers. The curriculums will focus on secondary education requirements and will provide educators' lesson plans that correlate with visitor center exhibits. The visitor centers will act as jumping off points for field trips to outdoor classrooms located on the Monument. The field experience will enhance the lesson plans. The development of secondary education curriculums will complement regional agency programming which focuses on elementary education.

“In the end, we conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand. We understand only what we are taught.”

- Baba Dioum Dioum
Senegalese Poet



Educational and Interpretive Media

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument holds a wealth of messages and stories to communicate to visitors and others. The type of media that works best for a particular message at any given location varies with the message and the site. Media are built or created to fulfill a specific purpose, to meet a defined need, and/or to accomplish a specific task.

The purpose or task drives messages carried by the media. For example, the purpose for a trailhead kiosk is to provide information necessary on-site to make a hiker's visit safe and enjoyable. Potential elements to fulfill that purpose are informative and interpretive messages, a registration or log book, self-guided brochures, and a bulletin board or other means for posting messages.

The following section defines the prescribed educational and interpretive media and projects for the Monument. The project calendar should be revisited each year to evaluate progress, to ensure priority projects will be funded for the following fiscal year, and to allow management the flexibility to prioritize projects and to add projects as the need arises.

Guidelines for Educational and Interpretive Program Media

Media prescriptions:

- Support the management objective of preserving the remote character of the Monument by recommending educational and interpretive opportunities in the frontcountry zone or outside Monument boundaries, stimulating economic development in local communities, and reducing stress on Monument resources.
- Limit infrastructure in the Monument interior to the minimum feasible.
- Recommend media that have the least impact on the land and the visual qualities of the visitor experience.
- Make visitors aware of interpretive and recreational opportunities on adjacent public lands.
- Recognize the uniqueness of the evidence for each Native American Indian culture represented on the Monument, and deliver message content developed in close consultation with the tribes.
- Provide program opportunities that are universally accessible.

“The major problems in the world are the result of the difference between the way nature works and the way [people] think.”

- Gregory Bateson

Considerations for Media Selection

Considerations for media selection are:

- Structures and other intrusions on the landscape should be kept to a minimum in keeping with Monument zone requirements. Emphasis should be placed on portable media such as brochures, handouts, and maps instead of large signs or sprawling high-profile buildings.
- Visitors should interact primarily with the landscape, not with exhibits. Exterior interpretive exhibits should be low-key, allowing the resource to speak for itself. Interior exhibits (e.g., visitor centers) should enhance the visitor's interaction with the landscape.
- Media should encourage and assist visitors to self-direct their interpretive experience whenever possible.
- Personal interpretive services and environmental educational programs, such as slide shows and lectures, will increase as more facilities are completed and a volunteer program is nurtured.

Types of Media

Publications

- *Tear off Sheets* - These sheets will be free/promotional items for area retailers consisting of functional orientation information.
- *Visitor Information Brochure* - The brochure is updated as needed and provides visitor orientation, safety information, resource protection, and a map that highlights recreation opportunities and road information.
- *General Monument Brochure* - The brochure highlights thematic information, introduces the purpose of the establishment of the Monument, and has a map for general visitor orientation.
- *Monument Newspaper* - The newspaper is updated annually and is available at Monument visitor centers. It is focused on specific topics of current interest and includes functional Front and Backcountry information.
- *Topic Brochures* - These brochures will be available at visitor centers and major portal kiosks in the Monument. Depending on results of future audience surveys, brochures may be translated into languages other than English.





Website

The internet website is based on and organized by specific themes. Topics are presented in greater depth, through a hierarchical approach that allows website visitors to click through to the level of detail they want. The website also provides functional orientation, front- and backcountry information and permits, directions to other frontcountry sites and links to recreational opportunities on surrounding public lands.

Changing Exhibits

Changing exhibits will be created for the visitor centers and will include articles, artwork, information relevant to current and ongoing research, and projects that are part of that visitor center's primary topic areas.

Information will be organized to correspond to the themes explored in the visitor centers. In addition, the displays can incorporate and/or supplement environmental education themes and its associated curriculum. For example, if remote video of a field researcher is broadcast to the classroom as part of the environmental education program, articles and still photos from the video could be incorporated into the changeable exhibit, as well as the environmental education curriculum associated with a particular visitor center.

Outdoor Signing

- *Major Kiosk* - Freestanding, multi-panel signs placed at major portals to the Monument, such as the Paria Movie Set Pullout, Hog Back Wayside, and Lower Blues Wayside. The purpose of the major kiosk is to provide interpretive stories, functional orientation and directions to other frontcountry sites, and recreational opportunities on surrounding public lands.
- *Minor Kiosk* - Freestanding, multi-panel signs placed along unimproved roads entering the Monument, just beyond the Monument boundary, such as Cottonwood, Burr Trail, Skutumpah, and Hole-in-the-Rock roads. Messages may include safety, orientation, and resource protection information, as well as limited highlights of local recreational opportunities and interpretive stories.
- *Wayside Sign* - Freestanding, interpretive signs located on Highways 89 and 12 focused on topics that are specific to that area.
- *Trailhead Kiosk* - Freestanding, two-panel sign located at major trailheads throughout the Monument displaying informative messages and, occasionally, very brief interpretive messages. These signs may also include a bulletin board, tear-off sheets, or brochures.
- *Trailhead Sign* - Freestanding, single-panel sign at minor trailheads throughout the Monument for trail identification.

Interpretive / Environmental Education Project Calendar

Projects	2001		2002		2003		2004		2005	
Monument Web Site (review and update quarterly)										
Visitor Information Brochure and Updates										
Update General Monument Brochure										
Children's General Monument Brochure										
Monument Newspaper										
Tear-off Sheet For Local Businesses										
Temporary Minor Kiosks										
Calf Creek Interpretive Trail Guide										
Design and Fabricate all Interpretive Exhibits for Five Visitor Centers										
Design Environmental Education Curricula for Interpretive Exhibits and Field Test										
Establish and Work with Environmental Education Committee to Organize Lecture Series and Review Environmental Education Curricula										
Write Interpretive Plan For Paria Movie Set and Implement										
Continue Work With Environmental Education Committee on Environmental Education Program										
Initiate Corridor Planning Process For Interpretive / Recreation Sites on Highway 12 & 89 (include evaluation of major portal kiosks, waysides, and Frontcountry recreation sites)										
Implement Corridor Plan For Interpretive / Recreation Sites on Highway 12 & 89										
Update Interpretive / Environmental Education Project List										



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